

- TELFAIR · ACADEMY · OF · ARTS · & · SCIENCES - (ART · GALLERY) - HABS NO GA- 217

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Georgia

Historic American Buildings Survey
Harold Bush-Brown, District Officer
Georgia School of Technology, Atlanta, Ga.

TELFAIR ACADEMY OF ARTS & SCIENCES
(Art Gallery)

Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia

Owner: Telfair Society of Arts & Sciences.Date of Erection: Approximately 1820.Architect: William Jay.Present Condition: Good. Rear part added in recent years.Number of Stories: Two stories and basement. Faces East.Materials of Construction: Foundation of brick, interior floors wood, exterior walls stuccoed, metal roof. Additions in the rear.Additional Data: Slightly remodeled. The lower floor has been left unchanged. The beautiful drawing - room with semi-circular ends, has finely carved marble mantels and plaster cornice and two plaster niches in front.

HAROLD BUSH-BROWN Dec 1, 1936

DISTRICT OFFICER-HABS

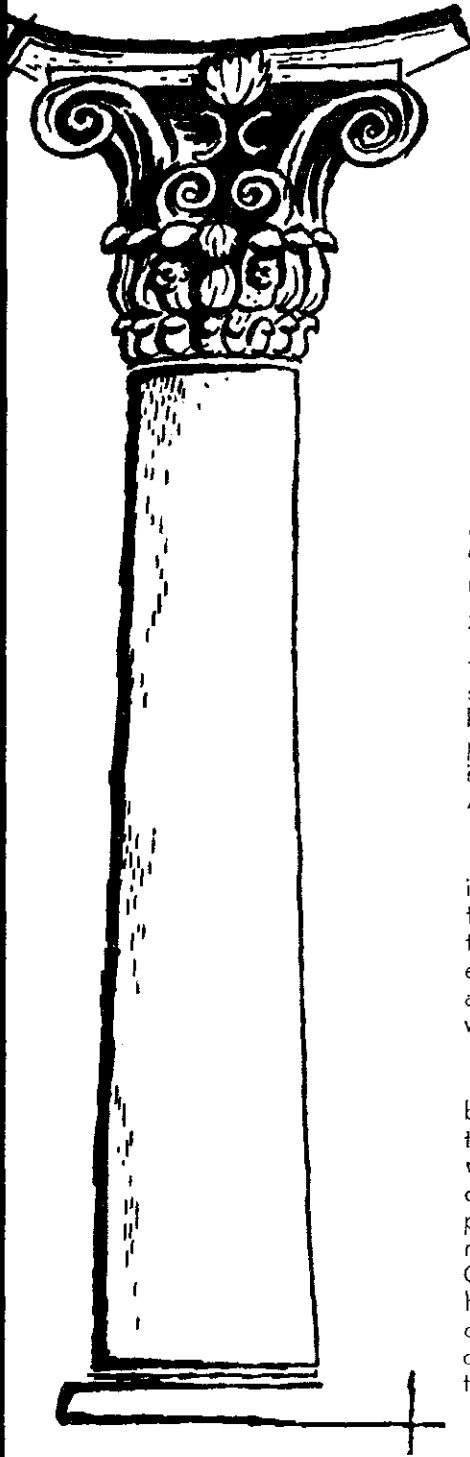
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President's Message

The bequest of the Owens-Thomas properties on Oglethorpe Square, which the Academy accepted in June of this year, is at once the greatest opportunity and the gravest new responsibility which has presented itself to the Academy since it was founded by Mary Telfair in 1875.

The trustees decided that they could accept the responsibility upon two conditions: That they have the approval (overwhelmingly given) of the Academy membership; that they have the encouragement and financial support of a substantial segment of the business, professional, and industrial leaders of the community.

A special committee of Telfair members was appointed under the chairmanship of Mr. Thomas Oxnard and composed, in addition to Mr. Oxnard, of Mr. Reuben Clark, Mr. T. T. Dunn, Mr. Herbert L. Kayton, and Mr. F. O. Wahlstrom. These gentlemen, with your president, undertook to solicit, and have, by special underwriting subscription, raised a sum in excess of \$7500 to be used for the maintenance of the museum property during the 1952-53 season, and for its integration into the business management of the Academy.

This sum was raised with the frank understanding that we will be back on an annual basis and that the trustees of the Academy can undertake to discharge the responsibilities of the joint operation of an academy and museum just so long as the leadership of Savannah finds this effort worthy of financial support.

The underwriting subscriptions will be followed by a broad appeal for membership support at the patron and regular membership levels. In the meantime, your president feels that the people of Savannah should know the names of the companies and individuals whose generosity have made it possible for the trustees to accept the Owens-Thomas bequest. We publish their names herein as a roll of honor; and to them in behalf of the trustees of the Academy and of the people of Savannah, your president extends his grateful thanks.

Thomas H. Gignilliat

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Message

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Gignilliat

Mary Telfair, from the
portrait by Carl Brandt,
N.A., first Director of
the Academy.



day of Leonardo daVinci, genius of the Italian Renaissance. Similar observances were held in all museums of the western world where daVinci's contributions to our culture are honored and preserved.

Of special interest was an exhibition of portraits of past presidents of Savannah's Hibernian Society, coinciding with the national publicity Savannah received in its traditionally colorful and popular observance of St. Patrick's Day.

The classes conducted in the basement studios by Mrs. Janice Hines devoted to keeping alive the art of early American furniture decoration were regretfully terminated with the advent of cold weather.

Attendance at special meetings and receptions was high, and the day-to-day increase in the number of people taking a few minutes off to enjoy Savannah's museum and gallery was most encouraging to Academy officials.

This resume was prepared before the conclusion of the special fund drive for annual operating revenue of the combined Academy and Museum, but the interim report made by the committee chairmanned by Mr. Thomas Oxnard and composed of Mr. Reuben Clark, Mr. T. T. Dunn, Mr. F. O. Wahlstrom, and the Academy's President, Mr. Thomas H. Gignilliat, shows conclusively that the leaders of Savannah's business and industry recognize the worth and importance of the Academy to the city, and that they will support it as essential to the general welfare of the community.

Savannah is to be congratulated that its citizens recognize that "man does not live by bread alone," and with this support from the top and the broad base of its dues-paying membership, the Trustees of the Academy can face with confidence the responsibilities which they have undertaken.

Ray Dilley

The Telfair Academy of Arts and the will of Miss Mary Telfair in 1875, in this mansion. Mary Telfair was the last survivor of the American Revolution and early Colonial period. The mansion was erected in 1818, the archaic building is one of a number of Savannah's most famous buildings. It was one of the former Colonial Government buildings. James Wright was arrested at the time of the Habersham and a band of the "Sons of Liberty" were active in the building.

● **ENTRANCE HALL** The entrance hall is the most impressive in America. In an article in the Post on July 17, 1948, George Sessions wrote: "The entrance hall is 'stupendously grand . . . would have been the palace of any ordinary principality.'" In this representative group of art objects, there are two of the earliest paintings of Titian, and one from the School of Leonardo da Vinci by Romanino, and a large decorative frieze. Here, near the large portrait of George Washington, examples of ceramics are shown, one a porcelain vase which won recognition in the 18th century, a frieze, an architectural feature, is cast in the temple of Greece, built during the Georgian period.

● **DRAWING ROOM** When the Continental Congress met in this Drawing Room in Philadelphia, the immediate past Governor of South Carolina, this room, "The room in which we are now sitting is of what the word 'elegance' means." It is the old Drawing Room and the Dining Room, and for an interesting exhibition of splendid old furniture, mostly from the Telfair Mansion. The furniture and furnishings are of the Regency period.

In the Drawing Room the marble mantels are particularly noteworthy, and above them hang portraits by John Hesselius and Jeremiah Theus. Among the number of other early portraits are

Climaxing last year's "Spring Festival of Art" was the awarding of top prize in the Art Club's annual exhibition to the painting by Emma C. Wilkins (right).

Permanent Collection

The Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, Incorporated, founded under the will of Miss Mary Telfair in 1875, is housed in her greatly enlarged family mansion. Mary Telfair was the last surviving child of Edward Telfair, hero of the American Revolution and early Governor of Georgia. The old Telfair mansion was erected in 1818, the architect being William Jay, who designed a number of Savannah's most famous buildings. The site of the building is that of the former Colonial Government House, in which the Royal Governor James Wright was arrested at the time of the Revolution by Major Joseph Habersham and a band of the "Sons of Liberty."

● **ENTRANCE HALL** The entrance hallway has been called one of the most impressive in America. In an article appearing in the Saturday Evening Post on July 17, 1948, George Sessions Perry says of these interiors that they are "stupendously grand . . . would have served with perfect adequacy as the palace of any ordinary principality." In this hallway, visitors are greeted by a representative group of art objects, showing types of the Academy's collections. Here, near the large portrait of the founder, Mary Telfair, there are seen two of the earliest paintings of the Academy, one from the School of Titian, and one from the School of Leonardo da Vinci, an early Italian painting by Romanino, and a large decorative Eighteenth Century Tapestry. Two fine examples of ceramics are shown, one a Sevres Vase, and one a Royal Berlin porcelain vase which won recognition at the Paris Exposition. The sculptured frieze, an architectural feature, is cast from that of the Parthenon, famous temple of Greece, built during the Golden Age of Pericles.

● **DRAWING ROOM** When the 59th General Council of the Society of Colonial Wars met in this Drawing Room Judge Edwin Owen Lewis of Philadelphia, the immediate past Governor General of the Society, said of this room, "The room in which we are meeting is an almost perfect example of what the word 'elegance' means." It is the policy of the Academy to use the old Drawing Room and the Dining Room as background for its collection of early American paintings, and for an interesting exhibition of splendid old furniture, mostly from the Telfair Mansion. The furniture and furnishings are of the Regency period.

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ones by Charles Willson Peale and George W. Connaroe. At the rear of the Drawing Room is a small exhibition room showing a fine collection of Textiles, authenticated by the Victoria-Albert and British Museums.

● **DINING ROOM** In the original Telfair mansion this room occupied the southwestern corner and was served by dumb waiters from the old Telfair kitchens (which have been restored) immediately beneath. Above one mantel hangs a large portrait of Alexander Telfair, and over the Regency sideboard one of Mrs. William Gibbons, grandmother of Mary Telfair. Over the second mantel is a family group portrait by Augustin T. Ribot, well-known French painter, and on either side, portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Archibald McAllister, neighbors and connections of the Telfairs. Other paintings include portraits by Samuel F. B. Morse (inventor of the telegraph, etc.), R. Beattie of London, and allegorical ones by Robert Loftin Newman, and Sebastiano Ricci (early Italian). At the rear of the Dining Room, the small exhibition room shows a group of unusually interesting costumes from the gallery's collection (most of them having association with Savannah's past), as well as cases of jewelry, laces, fans, and costume accessories.

● **TRUSTEES ROOM** In front of the Dining Room is the Trustees' Room, originally the Telfair Library, and now used for meetings of the Board of Trustees. In this interesting octagonal room is exhibited a collection of small modern bronzes.

● **EXHIBITION GALLERIES** Returning to the hallway, one may ascend the marble stairway at the rear, and view on either side, as one goes up, the Academy's collection of Contemporary American Paintings. This group includes examples by Aaron Bohrod, John Edward Heliker, Sol Wilson, Jean Liberte, Revington Arthur, Lamar Dodd, William Halsey, Reuben Gambrell, Robert Gwathmey, and others.

Upstairs the former bedrooms have been converted into modern exhibition galleries, with excellent skylights, and here in the North Galleries temporary exhibitions of great variety follow one another during the season. In the South Galleries groups of the permanent collection are shown, including examples of Gari Melchers, Bellows, Henri, Childe Hassam, Ernest Lawson, Chauncey F. Ryder, Hawthorne, Gifford Beal, and others.

● **THE ROTUNDA** Descending the short flight of stairs, and entering the Rotunda, one will find handsome paintings of the past generation featured. These artists include: Frank Brangwyn, Jean Francois Raffaelli, Alfred Smith, Edward W. Redfield, Willard Metcalf, Julian Story, Arthur Hacker, Cesare Laurenti, etc. The Rotunda is decorated with paintings, in the wide frieze above, by Carl Brandt, first director of the Academy. Near the entrance is exhibited one of the noted copies by Josiah Wedgwood, of the Portland Vase.

● THE WEST GALLERIES

into the West Galleries where are stairs in the West Galleries, in the Modern French Paintings owned Gaston LaTouche, Henri Martin, Adjoining this in the large Lecture permanent collection of painting philosopher, although sometimes temporary Malbone Memorial Room, adjoining Savannah house where the great in 1807; and in the entrance, (Hunter House) is shown.

Upstairs in the hallway of the connected with Savannah, the a Christopher Murphy, Sr., Emma (Adjoining this are three interesting of paintings, furniture and furnish 1880's and the Turn of the Century wood carving of Mariano Copede Christian Krohg, James Jebusa S Aman-Jean, Olga de Boznanska, Stewart, and others. Also on this showing the Oriental Collection.

● **THE STUDIOS** On the top floor lighted Studios, and equipment for separate stairs and outside entrance

● **HALL OF CASTS** After viewing the West Galleries, visitors may reach their steps, through the Rotunda thence down the stairs to the lower There under the Rotunda, is an elegant large Hall of Casts, in which the collection is especially notable because the casts were made from the original masterpieces, and are hence exact to scale.

● **THE OLD KITCHENS** Visitors enter the basement of the original adjoining the Hall of Casts. Here the kitchens of the Telfair mansion which is shown a most interesting collection of kitchen utensils and equipment of the past.

Most recent addition to the growing collection of contemporary art at the Telfair is Fern Warren's "Cotton Pickers" (right), whose encaustic colors defy effective black and reproduction.

● THE WEST GALLERIES

From the Rotunda there is a large doorway into the West Galleries where are a number of small exhibition rooms. Downstairs in the West Galleries, in the hallway, is hung an excellent collection of Modern French Paintings owned by the Academy, including paintings by Gaston LaTouche, Henri Martin, Friesseke, Raffaelli, Vermier, Lewisohn, etc. Adjoining this in the large Lecture Room is generally shown the Academy's permanent collection of paintings by Kahlil Gibran, painter, poet, and philosopher, although sometimes temporary exhibitions are hung there also. In the Malbone Memorial Room, adjoining, is beautiful woodwork from the old Savannah house where the great Miniaturist, Edward Greene Malbone, died in 1807; and in the entrance, woodwork from the same building (William Hunter House) is shown.

Upstairs in the hallway of the West Galleries hangs a group of paintings connected with Savannah, the artists including Eliot O'Hara, Louis Mora, Christopher Murphy, Sr., Emma Cheves Wilkins, Mark Sheridan, and others. Adjoining this are three interesting period rooms in which are shown groups of paintings, furniture and furnishings, these periods being mid-Victorian, the 1880's and the Turn of the Century (1900). These include rare Victorian items, wood carving of Mariano Copede, and paintings by: Robert Loftin Newman, Christian Krohg, James Jebusa Shannon, William M. Chase, Alfred Stevens, Aman-Jean, Olga de Boznanska, William A. Van Konneinijburg, Julius L. Stewart, and others. Also on this floor is an intriguing small exhibition room showing the Oriental Collection.

● THE STUDIOS On the top floor of the West Galleries are two large, skylighted Studios, and equipment for art classes and working groups, this having separate stairs and outside entrance.

● HALL OF CASTS

After viewing the West Galleries, visitors may retrace their steps, through the Rotunda, and thence down the stairs to the lower floor. There under the Rotunda, is an equally large Hall of Casts, in which the collection is especially notable because all of the casts were made from the original masterpieces, and are hence exact as to scale.

● THE OLD KITCHENS Visitors will enter the basement of the original house, adjoining the Hall of Casts. Here are the kitchens of the Telfair mansion, in which is shown a most interesting collection of kitchen utensils and equipment of the past.

Most recent addition to the growing collection of contemporary art at the Telfair is Ferdinand Warren's "Cotton Pickers" (right), whose rich encaustic colors defy effective black and white reproduction.



1951-52

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The firms and individuals listed in our honor roll are those referred to in the President's Message on the inside of the cover page as having underwritten the enlarged program of the Telfair Academy and Owens-Thomas Museum with their generous subscriptions.

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